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Chapter 1

Pop Music Production in the Digital Age: Old Ideas and New Realities.

The received wisdom is that:
- The internet has democratised communications, so that in the digital age, all information, including music, is going to be free
- The business model of record companies is broken. That they're dinosaurs that haven't evolved and don't deserve to survive
- And that would be a good thing for music and our culture because they were parasites anyway.
(…) It's up to us to explain why those points of view are wrong, why we've got an exciting future as a business, one that will benefit not just for those who make music, but everyone that loves music.
~ Geoff Taylor [1]

This song is copyrighted in U.S., under Seal of Copyright 154085, for a period of 28 years, and anybody caught singin it without our permission, will be mighty good friends of ourn, cause we don't give a dern. Publish it. Write it. Sing it. Swing to it. Yodel it. We wrote it, that's all we wanted to do.
~ Woody Guthrie (Leadbeater 2008: 58)

[T]here are systems of value other than, or in addition to, money, that are very important to people: connecting with other people, creating an online identity, expressing oneself – and, not least, garnering people's attention.
~ Caterina Fake (Tapscott and Williams 2008: 206)

1: Geoff Taylor "The Role of Record Labels in the Digital Age: BPI Speech, 9 juli 2008." http://www.bpi.co.uk/ Available 08-31-2009.

Introduction

We used to know how pop music production worked. An artist created a song, or at least received admiration for doing the creative part; a music industry took care of the business side of the process; and consumers applauded the artist, provided money for the whole transaction, and in return got to listen to music they liked. Then, after digital music technologies had been around for a short while, they turned out to have a great impact on this state of affairs. Now, every enthusiast can home record. Sampling and manipulating preexisting music have become much easier. Distributing music has gone from being expensive and difficult to being easy and virtually free. To the chagrin of some and the delight of others, the question how pop music production works no longer has a self-evident answer.

Practices, habitual ways of doing or organizing something, come with agreed-upon ways of understanding them. Such ways of understanding are necessarily simplifications, which generalize away a host of particularities. The traditional idea of pop music production described above is such a simplification. For example, it divides the practice of pop music production among three types of participants with clearly defined, separate roles. In actuality things are not so orderly, as a by now vast corpus of literature attacking clear-cut producer/consumer divisions makes clear (e.g. Willis et al.1990, Fiske 1995, Croteau 2006, Jenkins 2006, Bruns 2008). Also, the traditional idea of pop music production describes pop music production as something essentially static and fixed, while its actuality changes continuously.

This agreed-upon way of understanding the practice of commercial pop music production is not merely a benign simplification. It is also a habit of mind, a set of assumptions that often seems so self-evident that it slips below the radar of critical thought and is left uninvestigated. It is, in short, normalized. Furthermore, it is a set of assumptions which serves the interests of some parties better than those of others. In current copyright debates, in fact, the established idea of pop music production is one of the strongest weapons of the traditional music industry. However, this received wisdom is in decline. The copyright debates are gradually stripping away the self-evidence of the ideas just outlined. Their demise is an opportunity for competing theories of (pop) music production to gain influence.

Society's ideas on pop music production, then, are changing. The objective of this dissertation is to investigate a specific question, as well as the answers already explored. The question, in its most succinct form, is the following: who receives what kind of reward or acknowledgement for doing what in popular music culture? Or, in other words, what roles or functions are performed in popular music culture, and how is 'credit' given to the actors who perform them?

According to the traditional view, this is a simple question. The artist deserves both admiration and money for her efforts, the industry deserves a financial reward inasmuch as it provides a useful service to both artist and consumer (opinions differ), and consumers provide these payments. This answer, however, never comfortably fitted the reality it purportedly described. The current enthusiasm for new digital ways of engaging with music offers a welcome opportunity to rethink it. It is best re-thought, I will argue, not by looking for a single new overarching theory of pop music production, but by using a more piecemeal, practice by practice, approach.

In this chapter, I will first take a closer look at the traditional view of pop music production. Subsequently, I will illustrate to what degree this view has been normalized. I will do so by showing that even stern critics of the music industry have adhered to them. I then discuss some of the novel ideas on pop music production, which are emerging in the wake of the possibilities that new technologies offer, and point out places where I find these ideas inadequate. I end this chapter with an explanation of the approach I advocate, and which I will use throughout my dissertation.

The music industry's line of argument: theme and variations

"PIRACY KILLS CREATIVITY" is the slogan of an anti-piracy campaign started by a coalition of recording industry associations in Norway in 2008.[2] Adding force to the catch-phrase is a logo representing a pair of headphones laid out to resemble a skull. There is something paradoxical about this campaign. On the one hand, the slogan and logo present the risk of piracy as a matter of great urgency. On the other hand, these eye-catchers have an almost nostalgic feel to them. They echo a well-known and much parodied campaign launched by the British Phonographic Industry in the 1980s. In that campaign, a tape cassette was made to resemble a skull, and the slogan read: "HOME TAPING IS KILLING MUSIC. And it's illegal"(Moore 2004: 10).

This example is characteristic of an entire discourse on music recording and piracy. The arguments advanced by the music industry in the current copyright debates are variations on a single theme. Let me cite a brief to the Supreme Court from the case of MGM studios vs. P2P software provider Grokster in 2005. It states this theme in a complete yet concise way:

> If the work of creators is not protected, and is used around the world without just payment, it is very likely that, in the end, neither the creator nor the copyright holder will be able to continue to make this work available. The losers will not only be the artists whose talent and hard work is the creative heart on each screen, TV and Ipod; but also the very audience that enjoys quality movies, music and television.[3]

The music industry casts itself in the role of the provider of an indispensible service. If this service is discontinued, artists, consumers, and even music itself will suffer.

This is a remarkably old argument. It was already in use in the first decade of the twentieth century, before there was much in the way of a phonographic industry. Publishers of sheet music put it forward in defense against the music pirates of their age, who used photo-lithography to make cheap reproductions of the scores of popular songs. When things looked bleakest for the music publishers, they tried to show how indispensible they were. Historian Adrian Johns writes: "Backed into a corner, the publishers finally made a desperate gamble. They announced that piracy had grown so endemic that they could no longer justify investing

2: Piracy Kills Creativity http://www.piracykillscreativety.no/ Available 09-02-2009.
3: "Internet Piracy Hurts Individual Creators, Not Just "Industries", Say the Entertainment Unions" MusicUnited.org http://www.musicunited.org/press/2005/0126.html Available 09-02-2009.

in any new works whatsoever. The entire music publishing industry shut down" (Johns 2002: 76). As it turned out, however, the sheet music industry made this 'desperate gamble' on the eve of their victory, because taking pirates to court for conspiracy soon afterwards proved a successful legal strategy.

Stern warnings against the treat of piracy reappeared half a century later. The sheet music industry was by this time a mere shadow of its former self, and its successor, the phonographic industry, faced its first piratical challenge in the form of the tape recorder. In a 1962 article in the German music retail journal *Musikmarkt* (Music Market), the argument is restated as follows:

> [T]he danger raises itself that the creators will loose a very large part of their revenue for their creations, and, in the commercial area, for their products. This road, thought to its logical conclusion, would necessarily lead to a substantial shrinking of the record producers' capacity to record, on which all others involved in this area are to a large degree dependent for their livelihood.[4]

After this, the recording industry has successively worried about tape cassettes, DAT tapes, CD-r's, P2P download services, and streaming media, always relying on the same argument: if revenue is withheld, investing in the creation, recording, and distribution of music becomes impossible. Now let me look at some of the assumptions which underlie this line of argument. There are five points to which I would like to draw attention.

The discourse described above conceptualizes the problem of copyright protection as one that affects three main types of players. They describe the 'creator' as the one who generates the value in question. Then there are the consumers who enjoy quality content. Finally, there is the music industry, sometimes referred to as the 'copyright holders', who play a mediating role between the creator and these consumers. This mediating role works in two directions. The industry brings artistic works from creator to audience and it brings revenue from audience to artist. This description of pop music production provides the foundation for the claim that the music industry plays an indispensable role in pop music production, without which the whole system would collapse to the detriment of creators, industry, and consumers alike.

Second, among these three categories, the category of artists or creators is given a special position. They are not only revered by the audience, but they are also pushed forward by the music industry (Marshall 2005: 142-6, Haynes 2005: 56). To give an example, in May 2006, the NVPI (Dutch Society for the Phonographic Industry) launched the "True Fan" campaign. This campaign tried to attract the audience to 'legal' downloading (in Holland, downloading copyrighted content was at this point not actually illegal, although uploading was) by implying that this is what a 'true fan' does. The website is now defunct. The obvious reason for the industry's 'artist first' strategy is that the music industry is not very popular with the audience, whereas the artist is. With its slogan, "Paid downloading: it creates a connection", the NVPI played on fan's desires to connect with their favorite artist.[5]

4: "Schallplattenindustrie hofft nun auf den Bundestag" Der Musikmarkt **4**(5): 6. My translation

5: "Truefan Campagne" Downloadwinkels.nl http://www.downloadwinkels.nl/truefan.php Available 09-02-2009. "Truefan" Araglin.nl http://www.araglin.nl/pivot/entry.php?id=620 Available 09-02-2009.

Third, the artist is not only placed in the forefront by the music industry, but is also referred to in a particular vocabulary. Its central terms are 'artist', 'creator', and 'talent'. These words recur incessantly throughout music industry websites and in the briefs from the music industry submitted in intellectual property court cases. This vocabulary invites a romantic conceptualization of the pop musician (Marshall 2005). Set apart from audience members by her talent, the artist is "the creative heart" of the production of media content, that is, the one who makes it all come alive. She provides the magic, the immaterial value. The industry tries to achieve a positive reputation for itself by rhetorically placing itself at the service of the artist and her inspiration. As the site "Pro-Music" puts it:

> Making music begins with an inspired idea for a song. But it doesn't stop there. Every song released is a collaborative process involving lots of people with many different skills and talents. And they all share the same passion – releasing a great track.[6]

Fourth, this romantic conceptualization of the artist tends to value originals over derivative works, as becomes quite clear, for instance, when one reads the briefs of the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court case of Eldred vs. Ashcroft. Online publisher Eric Eldred challenged the constitutionality of the so-called Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act (CTEA). He argued that further extension of copyright would atrophy the public domain and stifle the creation of derivative works. The brief for the respondent argues:

> Ultimately, petitioners wish to displace Congress's preference for copyright-based dissemination of works during the CTEA's prescribed term, and instead to allow indiscriminate exploitation by public domain copyists like petitioners. (…) [P]etitioners assert a novel constitutional right to exploit others' creative expression.[7]

Fifth and last, another important corollary to the romantic view of the artist is the presumption that she does not create for profit, but from an inner need for (self-) expression. The audience pays for musical works, then, not so much to reward artists as to facilitate them. Revenue enables artists to devote themselves to creation full-time. In terms of the citation from the MGM vs. Grokster case above, if revenue is withheld: "the creator (…) will [not] be *able* to continue to make this work available" (italics mine).

These assumptions underscore the traditional view of pop music production, which allows the music industry to make its case persuasively. For most of the music industry's history, these assumptions were not seriously challenged at all. On the contrary, debates between the industry and its antagonists tended to reinforce these assumptions.

6: "What Does it Take?" Pro-Music http://www.pro-music.org/Content/InsideTheMusicBiz/whatdoesittake.php Available 09-02-2009.

7: Olson, T.B., McCallum, R.D.jr., Wallace, L.G., Lamken, J.A., Kanter, W. and J.S. Koppel (2002) "Brief for the Respondent" [Eric Eldred, et al. v. John D. Ashcroft, Attorney General of the United States. 537 U.S. 186], 7, 46. Available at "Open Law: Eldred v. Ashcroft" Berkman Center for Internet and Society http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/eldredvreno/legaldocs.html Available 09-02-2009.

Hating the industry

Throughout the history of recorded music, the unpopularity of the music industry has been a constant corollary to the admiration for music artists. Geoff Taylor, Chief Executive of the British Phonographic Industry, notes that 'humans are a musical species', and then laments: "If only our Creator had gone the extra mile and hard-wired people to love the music industry, my job would be an awful lot easier."[8] The current enthusiasm for a participatory music culture, however, is a recent phenomenon. Older critiques of the music industry tend to follow a different line of argument. They present the relation between artist and industry as one that is of necessity strained, and they take the side of the artist against the industry.

Many examples of this kind of critique could be given,[9] but I want to focus on a single highly illustrative example, namely the concept album *The Shaming of the True* by the relatively unknown late progressive rock musician Kevin Gilbert.[10] It tells the tale of the musical career of fictitious pop artist Johnny Virgil, and moves in a gray area between the uncompromisingly satirical and the generally bleak. Sticking closely to the rules of the genre of the musical, it starts off with a 'want-song', titled "Parade", in which the protagonist voices his ambitions:

> My name is Johnny Virgil, I play this here guitar
> I play it for myself.
> Got a heart that's full of music, a head that's full of songs
> Got a love for nothing else.

Immediately at the start then, the idea of expressivism, of creation from an inner drive, which we encountered in the previous section, is evoked. However, to express himself and to share the content of his 'creative heart' is not Johnny's only ambition. A heroic drive towards 'great deeds' and an 'eternal life on the tongues of others' is also present: "My name is Johnny Virgil, and I'm gonna be a Star. Gonna get my share of fame."

In "City of the Sun", Johnny encounters the music industry officials and learns their opinion: "Wash all that magic from your hands. Make it so we might understand." The industry wants to make a commercial product out of Johnny Virgil's art, and an auctorial voice warns him: "Oh Johnny, you've got a seed in your head. It's the seed of your demise. Ambition is gonna lure you away into the land of compromise." The song "Suit Fugue (Dance of the A&R Men)" is a carefully crafted piece of baroque-style counterpoint, in which one record industry official after another joins in with the voices on Johnny Virgil's answering machine, first presenting a friendly face to get him to sign, and then attempting to interfere with the artistic process. After two fugatic expositions, the A&R men form a background choir ("patronize, patronize, pass the buck, pass the buck, weadle weadle weadle weadle, sell sell sell sell") and Johnny gives in to their pressure: "My name is Johnny Virgil, I play this here guitar… Ah fuck it. My name is Johnny Virgil, I'm gonna be a star."

8: Geoff Taylor "The Role of Record Labels in the Digital Age: BPI Speech, 9 juli 2008." http://www.bpi.co.uk/ Available 08-31-2009.
9: See for instance Albini, S. "The Problem with Music" http://negativland.com/albini.html Available 09-02-2009, Love, C (2000). "Courtney Love does the Math" http://archive.salon.com/tech/feature/2000/06/14/love/
10: Gilbert, K. (2000). THE SHAMING OF THE TRUE, The Estate of Kevin Gilbert.

Songs that follow satirize the careful stylization of artists ('Image Maker') and the pitching of song ideas ('Certifiable Number One Smash'). Johnny becomes a rising star. Psychologically, however, he pays a heavy price for his willingness to compromise: "Here I am again with everything that I could want and I am empty. With the blanket of approval and the slaps upon my back and I am empty." As he realizes that it is all empty, Johnny suffers a breakdown, submits numbly to narcotic and sexual escapades ('Fun'), and comes close to a complete mental breakdown ('The Ghetto of Beautiful Things'). Meanwhile, he searches frantically for ways to pull himself out of the swamp of the mundane and trivial, and to reestablish contact with something of genuine (immaterial) value: "I'm looking for a new love to show me the way. To laugh at tomorrow and live today." At the end our hero emerges from this private hell, not heroic, but forgotten:

> My name is Johnny Virgil. I used to be a star.
> It was a long long time ago.
> Sometimes I hear my records in the wee hours of the night
> On the oldies radio.
> People sometimes ask me for the secret of success.
> I tell them what I know
> Believe in what you're doing, remember who you are
> And who knows where you'll go.

However critical this album is of the commercial production of pop music, it shares all the cliché assumptions that I identified in the previous section, which enable the music industry to legitimatize its practices. When both sides in a discussion entertain certain presuppositions, then it becomes very unlikely that these will be critically investigated. Thus, proponents and opponents of the music industry alike have contributed to the 'normalization' of a certain view of pop music production, and reinforced it as a paradigm that is seldom questioned or investigated. Before I discuss contemporary challenges to this habitual view, let me describe it in more detail.

A tacit metaphysics of musical communication

Both the music industry and its critics used to agree that pop music production was about three main types of actors, namely artists, music industry workers, and consumers. They agreed, furthermore, that the highest status rightfully belonged to the artist. They both conceptualized the artist in romantically derived terminology. They jointly placed the artist at the very start of the production process, where she enjoyed the special status of a creator, or genius, in the original sense of the word. And finally, they both held the view that the artist presumptively created from an inner drive or need. What constitutes the common ground of these assumptions? I want to argue that it is a theory of pop music production, to which people generally do not subscribe overtly, but which tends to be implicit in their thinking. It is most easily explained by tracing the material and the immaterial aspects of music production.

Imagine the artist and the consumer of music as opposite ends of a sender-receiver diagram. A mediating industry stands in between. The artist, being the 'creative heart' of the

music industry, is capable, because of her talent, to take something immaterial - inspiration or emotion - and to encode that into a song. This immaterial good is subsequently placed in a material (or virtual) carrier and distributed to a consumer. These mundane, material aspects of the process are the task of the industry. The consumer, at the other end, decodes the message, that is, she extracts the immaterial value (the inspiration, the emotion) from its material carrier and is thereby touched on an immaterial level.

This implicit theory of music production and consumption has important consequences. First, it tends to value originality over derivation, especially in songwriting, but to some extent also in performance. The artist, according to this theory, is at the start of the communicative process, 'breathing life' into an original song. If she derives her work from previous sources, this dilutes her status as the sender, and, by consequence, it dilutes the status of the work as the artist's (self-) expression.

To be sure, this is not to say that a preference for originals holds sway over every respect of pop music culture. Many artists proudly name their 'influences' and their indebtedness to a tradition, often switching fluidly between the veneration of predecessors and the exaltation of originality. In the next chapter, I will explain this ambiguous attitude historically from the double roots of the contemporary view of the pop music artist in originality-oriented art schools and tradition-oriented music styles such as blues and R'n'B. However, the implicit theory of pop music culture outlined above makes references to the superiority of original over derivative works seem self-evident.

Second, the theory presumes the artist's role as sender in an act of communication. The artist is someone who wants to say something, to express herself, to share something of immaterial value. Questions of revenue belong to the material level of the industry, and are supposedly not what drives the artist. In fact, pop music culture tends to value artists more when they are deemed to be 'authentic', operating from a drive towards creative expression, and to value artists less when they are perceived to be 'commercial', if they are 'in it for the money'. Aside from originality, then, the idea of creation resulting from an intrinisic drive is part of our commonsense standards for artistic excellence.

Third, according to this theory there is an unbreakable connection between an artist and her work, because the immaterial value it holds will always remain *her* message. In the period when these intuitions reached their contemporary form, that is, in the later 1960s, consumers purchased, and then owned, a material carrier (a record). This carrier was then their property, but it was only a means of access to songs – to the artist's personal expression - which they clearly did not own. Intellectual property is a strange kind of property. I pay for a song, but it does not become mine. It is still the artist's song. The expressivist intuition is therefore of great benefit to the recording industry. But it also requires some careful rhetorical maneuvering. A song may officially be the intellectual property of a record company and/or a music publisher, but commonsensically it belongs to the artist. The appropriate attribution is to the artist, not to the company. To keep this inconsistency from becoming too obvious, the industry places the artist in a central position, and presents itself as her servant, who merely takes the burden of the mundane technicalities of copyright from her shoulders.

Fourth, and most importantly, this implicit theory of music production provides an answer to the question of who deserves what kind of credit for what efforts. It is this 'distribution of credit', which will be my main concern throughout this dissertation. According to the implicit theory underlying the rhetoric of the music industry, the proper division is as follows:

- The industry takes care of the material aspects of music production. It provides a service. For this, it deserves a financial reward.

- The artist provides the immaterial value that makes the whole process worthwhile. As explained above, the artist is apparently not 'in it for the money'. Paradoxically, she deserves a financial reward precisely for this reason. Revenue frees the artist from trivial worries about the necessity of bringing home the bacon, and facilitates her creativity. Her real reward, however, is lofty and immaterial like the value she produces. It is the love and admiration of her audience.

- The consumer reaps the benefit of both the immaterial value and its material carrier (or more contemporary form of access), and must give two kinds of credit in return, namely money to both artist and industry, and admiration only to the artist.

Older critics of the music industry such as Kevin Gilbert, whom I discussed in the previous section, agree with what this theory says about the relation between the artist and the consumer. It is the role of the industry they call into question.

This view is the result of a long history of thinking about music production, which I will sketch out in the next chapter. Also, it is a view which is contingent on a particular practice of music production. The line of argument of the music industry is intended to keep this practice alive by playing upon intuitions rooted in that very practice, and by presenting them as self-evident unchanging truths. If the argument is accepted, then only one kind of music practice is legitimate, namely the commercial production of music according to the industry's traditional business model. If commercial tributism is not accepted, however, a wide variety of music practices are legitimate, each with its own ideas on what is an appropriate distribution of credit.

For the sake of convenience and clarity, allow me to make some terminological distinctions. Below, I will refer to the above theory of the material and immaterial aspects of the trajectory of music as the "romantic metaphysics of musical communication". I will discuss its historical roots in the next chapter. To the traditional music industry's answer to the credit question, which I stated above in three points, I will refer as "the commercial theory of appropriate credit". I will call the answer to the credit-question implicit in older criticisms of the music industry, such as Kevin Gilbert's, "the anti-commercial theory of appropiate credit". In general, a "theory of appropriate credit" as I will use the term, is any overarching answer to the credit question, which is assumed to apply to all of pop music culture. Now, I turn to some of the new ideas, which are emerging as commercial tributism is under pressure.

Level playing fields, generalized artistry, agency

In the space opened up by the gradual demise of the traditional view of pop music production, new ideas are taking root. But whereas the rhetoric of the music industry has been uniform, the collection of ideas competing to replace it is varied and complex, even if the stark opposition between two camps in the copyright debates has the effect of making it look more like a single, coherent movement. Among what the British Phonographic Industry's

chief executive Geoff Taylor calls "the digital utopians," we find both social activists who exalt new opportunities for grassroots collaboration (Leadbeater 2008, Shirky 2008), and market theorists who explain how a company can take advantage of all web 2.0 has to offer (Tapscott and Williams 2008, Li and Bernoff 2008). There is a surge of enthusiasm for, amongst other things, remix culture and engagement through reuse (Lütticken 2002, Bourriaud c.s. 2005, Lessig 2008), for the erosion of the boundaries between consumption and production (Croteau 2006, Jenkins 2006, Bruns 2008), and for online opportunities for collective action (Jenkins 2006, Benkler 2007, Leadbeater 2008, Shirky 2008), and although these themes are surely related, they are not the same thing. Moreover, there is a growing number of dissenting voices, who either criticize the new developments or try to add nuance to the enthusiasm (Keen 2007, Berry 2008, Schäfer 2008, van Dijck 2009). In this section and the next, I will discuss a selection of themes which return throughout this literature, chosen for their relevance to my main topic, the question of the appropriate distribution of credit.

One recurrent idea is that digital music technologies have made the distribution of music easy and virtually free, and that this allows artists to dispense with the 'middle men' of the music industry. This argument is mostly made in weblogs by practicing independent musicians, and often lacks the utopian flavor of the general discourse. Music blogger David Rose writes:

> I am a big proponent of the 'direct to fan' movement where artists by-pass the traditional record label route and build a relationship directly with their fans. There are now a large number of innovative, technology related options available to artists for directly reaching fans through online distribution, marketing, commerce and viral promotions. Unfortunately, almost none of the companies that have developed these wonderful tools have sustainable business models.[11]

And music blogger "Vivian" intimates:

> Seriously though, when I think back on the stranglehold record companies have had on the music industry for the last 60 years or so, I'd say all in all, I absolutely prefer things the way they are now with this much more level playing field.[12]

Notice that this response to the current situation does not seriously rethink any of the elements of the traditonal view of pop music production or its traditional critique. The reasoning still involves a radical boundary between a creative artist, conceived of in romantically derived terminology, and a passive consumer. The question remains whether the industry deserves a place in between these two parties. According to some advocates of a more level playing field, copyright law, too, must be rethought, because in its current form "[c]opyright also accentuates inequality between music makers, especially between stars and small-time

11: Rose, D. "To a Mother Concerned About File-Sharing" KnowtheMusicBizz.com: Community Powered Knowledge http://www.knowthemusicbiz.com/index.php/BIZ-BLOG/To-a-Mother-Concerned-About-File-Sharing.html Available 09-03-2009.
12: 'Vivian.' "File Sharing and its Effects on the Music Bizz." The Adventures of an Indie Star. http://indiestaradventures.blogspot.com/2009/04/file-sharing-and-its-effects-on-ever.html Available 09-03-2009.

music makers" (Toynbee 2004: 124). Most importantly in the present context, the ideas on appropriate credit remain utterly unchanged. Artists deserve admiration and financial facilitation, and the music industry deserves payment inasmuch as it provides a valuable service.

A more radical theme, which recurs throughout the discourse on the digital future of pop music, is the idea that with these new technologies everyone can be an artist - that is, everyone can express herself and make this expression available to the world. This idea might be called "generalized artistry", and it often appears in the margin of texts which central concern is related (sharing economy, collective intelligence, prosumption, et cetera). Charles Leadbeater, for example, writes about guitarists who post clips of their playing on YouTube and who sometimes reach a large audience that way:

> These guitarists are classic Pro Ams [professional amateurs, BJ]: they play for the love of it, not for money or fame, but they play to extremely high standards, enthusiastically learning from one another. It is now easier than ever for Pro Ams in many fields to create, publish and share content – whether in the form of film, software, or text. (...) That capacity for collective self-expression and self-organisation creates new options for us to become organized, to get things done together in new ways (Leadbeater 2008: 43).

This example also makes clear what is thought to motivate this practice of playing and posting, namely the love of music itself, or a drive towards self-expression. Just like Johnny Virgil in Kevin Gilbert's concept album, these boys play this-here guitar, they play it for themselves. As rock band and cultural activists Negativland have it:

> One thing that may shake out of this situation in the long term is that, if payment for any and all music significantly diminishes, all the home studios motivated for reasons other than profit will hang on and continue to produce music much longer than the big, extravagant, corporate music factories will ever care to do. (...) At any rate, music will not disappear under such conditions: people will keep making it whether they're paid or not.[13]

This way of thinking departs significantly from the received wisdom of the traditional view of pop music production. The line between the realm of the artist and the producer and that of the consumer becomes blurred. Even if it is not apparent in the citation above, arguments of this kind tend to go together with denunciations of the cult of the original. Yet in some respects, generalized artistry is a continuation of the traditional view. It retains the aspect of expressivism, of creation from an inner need or drive, and makes it more radical and general. In this perspective, the line between the authentic and the commercial artist no longer seperates those who are in it for the money from those who may be financially facillitated but who primarily make music for the love of music itself and/or for the love of their audience. It distinguishes between those who stop creating when they no longer receive financial recompense and those who persist.

13: 'Negativland' (2005). "Two Relationships to a Cultural Public Domain" Available at: http://www.negativland.com/news/uploads/negativland-two_relationships_essay.pdf Available 09-03-2009, pp. 6-7.

The theme of generalized artistry, then, does not result from a rethinking of pop music production from scratch. The romantic metaphysics of musical communication remains intact. Like the traditional view of pop music production, generalized artistry comes with an implicit stance on the appropriate distribution of credit for effort, albeit a very different one. Creation, being its own reward, does not require any recompense, except, in some accounts, the admiration of listeners (notice that this, too, reproduces an aspect of commercial and anti-commercial tributism). As amateur musician 'Steph' comments in an online discussion:

> I put everything I write on my website with a great big download button beside it, because for me, payment is when I have someone come up to me after a show or wherever and goes "I listened to this track here, and seriously, that rocked". (...) Those are the responses that should be the payment, because I am sorry, sure it doesn't put food on my table, (...) but that is worth more than getting a couple of bucks per cd.[14]

There is a third theme which does not reproduce the expressivism of the traditional view of pop music production, but which is still in a sense expressivist. I want to mention it briefly here and devote more attention to it in the next chapter. The academic literature which contributes to the copyright debates from a cultural studies oriented position tends to emphasize the issue of agency, the freedom of cultural subjects to act (Terranova 2004, Oram, ed. 2001, Gillespie 2007, Baym & Burnett 2009). For instance, McCann (2005) draws upon a detailed study of copyright and traditional Irish music to develop a nuanced theory of what he calls "enclosure", and Gillespie (2007) discusses the threat of digital culture being "wired shut". Both papers, then, deal with the (perceived) possibilities for action in culture. They are in favor of a culture that affords a great deal of agency and they are usually opposed to forces which seek or tend to 'lock culture down'.

There are two important similarities between the enthusiasm for agency of cultural scholars and the generalized artistry discussed before. These are the facts that both favor a participatory culture and focus on the need to remove the obstacles to participation. In this way, both arguments implicitly reinforce the assumption that cultural participation is motivated by an internal drive on the part of the actors. Participation does not need to be stimulated; it merely needs to be enabled.

In this section, then, I have drawn attention to three of the new themes which are emerging as the traditional view of pop music production is under increasing pressure, and all three have something in common. They do not raise the question what motivates musical creativity, and thus reinforce the idea that creativity is motivated by an internal need for self-expression. In the remainder of this dissertation, I will challenge this idea. Before I explain my alternative, however, let me discuss another recurrent theme in the literature on the future of pop music production, one which explicitly addresses the motivations of creative activity.

14: "To a Mother Concerned by File-Sharing" MusicianWages.com: The Website for Working Musicians [Comment by 'Steph'] http://www.musicianwages.com/the-working-musician/to-a-mother-concerned-about-file-sharing/ Available 09-03-2009.

Sharing economies

Some of the utopian literature on web 2.0. and participatory culture betrays a surge of new interest in the ideas of sharing and sharing economies. This idea is central, for instance in Yochai Benkler's *The Wealth of Networks*, Charles Leadbeater's *We-Think*, and Lawrence Lessig's *Re-mix*, while being present, albeit less prominently, in other works (Barbrook 2002, Benkler 2007, Leadbeater 2008, Lessig 2008, Shirky 2008). Among these, I find the book of legal scholar and legal activist Lawrence Lessig the most interesting and instructive.

The first part of Lessig's book sings the praises of the creative reuse of existing content, and of the new technologies which have extended and proliferated the possibilities for such creativity. It argues that copyright law should be reformed to make such creativity legal. This part of the book, upon first reading, hovers mostly between the stances of generalized artistry and pro-agency partisanism. There is a flavor of generalized artistry, for example in passages such as: "The ways and reach of speech are now greater. More people can use a wider set of tools to express ideas and emotions differently" (Lessig 2008: 83). But remixing should be made legal, according to Lessig, not just for the sake of artistic expression. What is at stake is a form of freedom:

> We grew up taking for granted the freedoms we needed to practice our form of writing. (...) Our kids want the same freedom for their forms of writing. For not just words, but for images, film, and music. (...) It is continuous with what has always been part of RW [read-write, BJ] culture – the literacy of text. But it is more. It is the ability for amateurs to create in contexts that before only professionals ever knew. (Lessig 2008: 107-108)

This freedom to create, this agency, is important to legalize, and even to actively promote, according to Lessig, even apart from anyone's inner need for self-expression. It should be spread because the ability to manipulate different media is a form of literacy, which enhances the cultural citizenship of those who use it. Previous generations got essay asignments in school, which prompted students to use the medium of writing, not to help them express their emotions and not in the hope that they would enrich culture with a brilliant text, but as a means for learning to think critically and with nuance. New technologies, according to Lessig, should at the least be allowed, and preferably actively be made to serve the same function for today's youth (Lessig 2008: 80-82).

In the latter half of the book, Lessig explicitly addresses the issue of motivation as he looks at new forms of online collaboration. The viability of such collective projects as Wikipedia, Linux software, or the Internet Archive depends on the willingness of a large group of people to participate without payment. In answering the question what motivates such participation, Lessig steps away from expressivism and introduces the concept of the sharing economy. Implicated in this concept is the idea of reciprocity, albeit a reciprocity which is not mediated by money. Sharing economies are practices of exchange, which tend to be damaged or destroyed by the introduction of money, and to which perceptions of fairness are crucial. Aside from "generalized exchange", motivating factors can be showing off to peers, intellectual stimulation, improving one's own skills, or a belief in the project one is contributing to. Lessig believes that in the future sharing economies will become markedly

more prominent. Commercial economies, however, will not disappear. What will result is a hybrid economy, and to Lessig this is not just the most probable, but also the most preferable solution.

Remarkably, the theme of remix creativity, of which the first part of the book is an exaltation, is virtually absent in the second part. In fact, none of the many examples of sharing economies that Lessig provides concern artistic creativity. Even ccMixter, the online remix community which developed around the creative commons copyright licenses which Lessig invented, is not mentioned in the context of sharing economies. In this way, Lessig's book provides an especially visible exemplification of something that is more hidden in other books on digital sharing economies: sharing an artistic work you created may well not be the same as sharing any other thing. The principles that made Wikipedia a success are quite possibly not the same as those that make ccMixter work.

Artistic sharing and other types of contributing or participating, then, are two different things. But instead of sticking to the idea of formulating a new overarching theory of pop music production, which takes this complicating fact into account, I want to take a different approach. It might be called a "natural setting approach", with a reference to the method that American psychologist Ulric Neisser advocated for his own discipline (Neisser 1976). Criticizing the cognitive psychology of his day for relying too much on experiments in the laboratory, and for thus compromising its "ecological validity", Neisser promoted a renewed attention for the context in which everyday behavior occurs. My own "natural setting approach" involves analyzing pop music culture one practice at a time, rather than building a single overarching theory for this whole field. For this purpose I want to introduce an important concept.

A cultural practices approach

The term "cultural practices" will have a central place in my argument and deserves some explanation. The word "practices" refers to activities that people perform in a routinized way, so that many aspects of how they perform and conceptualize these activities are taken for granted. A focus on practices is a useful starting point for research because it is by way of the habitual or customary aspect of practices that human activity becomes connected to particular tools and technologies, and to a discourse. The word "culture" refers to the aggregate of ways people use symbols and concepts to understand the world around them, ascribing meanings to this life-world which are shared and which appear to be self-evident. I designate the practices under discussion as cultural practices to emphasize the importance of contextual factors and shared assumptions to the activities in question. I will use the term "cultural practices" exclusively in relation to collective activities, because, while solitary activities undeniably take place in a cultural context of shared meanings, they are not informed by meanings that are shared within the practice. In chapter three, I will explore the methodological aspects of the concept of "cultural practices" more fully.

What the present dissertation proposes, in a nutshell, is this: collective cultural practices all have their own agreed-upon assumptions on what is appropriate credit for different sorts of contributions. Such shared assumptions are part of what makes a practice work. If an emerging practice does not hit upon a way of allotting credit which makes it

worthwhile for all key participants to keep contributing, then it will simply dissolve again. Instead of searching for an overarching theory of cultural participation, therefore, I propose an approach that analyzes, practice by practice, how credit-giving actually works.

As I will argue below, the traditional view of pop music production has always been problematic. Those engaged in the cultural practice of mix taping, for example, had different views on the appropriate allotment of credit within this practice, and these competed with the dominant view. While expressivism may be assumed in the discourse surrounding a practice, it is not presupposed on a practical level - or at least not in the practices I have investigated. In any viable practice, contributing is worth the effort; you get credit for it. One especially important upshot of this fact is the persistent importance of attribution. Even in practices such as remixing, where the work someone produces is a recombination of parts of preexisting works, there is a special relation between a remixer and her particular version of the musical material. A third and final important thing which the proposed approach enables me to get into focus is the importance of the contributions of non-artist participants. The traditional view constructs a radical boundary between artists and non-artists, and subsequently places artists above other contributors. Actual practices are not so neatly carved up, and a cultural practices approach I better equipped to deal with the particularities of specific situations than an overarching theory of pop music production.

In the next chapter, I will take a closer look at the history of the traditional view of pop music production. This will enable me to add precision to my criticism of it, as well as to my criticism of more recent expressivist stances. Furthermore, it will help me situate my own views in relation to existing theory. The chapter following it, chapter three, is a discussion of matters of methodology and method. After this, three case studies follow, each of which looks at a specific cultural practice.

The first case study, in chapter four, looks at the practice of making mix tapes (the general practice of rerecording preexisting songs onto tape cassettes, not the similarly named practices from the hiphop and dance subcultures). In a recent wave of nostalgic blog entries, mix taping is referred to as an art form. I suggest that this choice of terminology reflects the influence of the commercial theory of appropriate credit, and that it obscures many aspects of mix taping which are worthy of attention.

The second case study, in chapter five, investigates the online remix community ccMixter. It shows how in environments where all creativity amounts to reuse of the creations and contributions of others, the notion of rightful attribution may be reinforced, rather than dissolved. Attribution is one of the central elements that make ccMixter work.

The third and last case study, in chapter six, studies the cultural practice of deejaying at parties. It will give an analysis of what, according to DJs, makes someone a good DJ, and it will show that this standard applies to DJ-producers who mix tracks together as well as to retro DJs who play songs back to back. The status of the former tends to be markedly higher, and this, I propose, is a consequence of the persistent influence of the commercial theory of appropriate credit. Over the course of these three case studies, a focus on credit-giving will illuminate the cultural practices studied in new and sometimes surprising ways. First, however, I turn to the history of the commercial theory of appropriate credit.